

# **Istanbul Criminals Using Distraction Techniques**

## **SAFETY AND SECURITY**

**Europe - Turkey**

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The Regional Security Office at U.S. Consulate Istanbul reported the following:

### **Background:**

The following incident occurred in Sariyer on Saturday afternoon, September 30. An American citizen was hailing a taxi on a main thoroughfare in Sariyer when she was approached by four people. Three were women, two of whom were teenagers and the other in her mid-forties. The male who accompanied them was in his late teens. All were dressed in typical clothing for their age group and the area.

### **Scenario:**

As the group approached the American citizen, the youngest female asked the American citizen a question in Turkish. When she responded that she did not speak Turkish, the teenage girl pretended to faint and fell down to the ground. The teenager's back ended up leaning against the American citizen's legs. Moments later, the young girl who fainted extended her arms behind her back and tried to wrap them around the American citizen's legs. Simultaneously, the American citizen discovered that the hand of one of the other individuals was attempting to open her bag. She stepped out of the leg hold and moved the hand away from her bag. The group eventually moved up the street. No items were taken and there were no injuries.

### **Significance:**

Although incidents involving criminals utilizing distraction techniques are more common in tourist areas and Istiklal Caddesi, they can happen anywhere.

### **Precautions:**

- Ensure that you minimize the items in your purse or wallet.

- Carry only what you need.
- Remove any extra credit cards.
- Remove any valuables.
- Make copies of what credit cards you do carry so you can report them stolen if an incident occurs.
- Do not carry around your social security card.
- Do not carry your original passport. Carry a phototocopy.
- Be aware of your surroundings.

Report any incidents to the Regional Security Office.